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SUBJECT: PRT LASHKAR GAH: FOURTH SUICIDE BOMBING IN HELMAND
PROVINCIAL CENTER

¶1. (SBU) On March 27 at approximately 1150 local time, a suicide bomber blew himself up in downtown Lashkar Gah, provincial center of Helmand Province. The incident occurred at the headquarters of the Afghan National Police (ANP). (NOTE: The headquarters is across from the entrance to Lashkar Gah's "green zone", the semi-secure street that houses the Governor's compound and other buildings and was the site of two suicide bombings last year. END NOTE.) The bomber arrived riding a motorcycle, dismounted, and attempted to enter the compound. The provincial police chief told reporters that the bomber, wearing an Afghan National Army uniform, detonated the device as ANP were searching him at the compound's entrance. A report from one Afghan eye witness (forwarded to PRTOFF) described a number of dead bodies and body parts in the compound.

¶2. (SBU) Four ANP were reportedly killed in the blast, including the commander of the check point at the entrance to the headquarters. The local hospital reported three ANP injured, and no civilian injuries, though another report identified (likely slight) injuries to three civilians. Press reports identified only one injured person. The Helmand Task Force assisted in the return of one of the ANP to family in Kabul.

¶3. (U) The radio carried the claim of a Taliban spokesman that the bomber's target was a security meeting supposedly taking place inside the headquarters. To reporters, the police chief identified himself as the bomber's target.

¶4. (U) This was the fourth suicide bombing attack this year in Helmand, the third this month, and the first to kill anyone other than the bomber.

NEUMANN